

Caribbean Science Consortium



Background

- Critical science needs in the Caribbean
- Insufficient focus on science in the Caribbean
- a need to increase science focus and address the needs of the Caribbean
- a need to coordinate and leverage the limited resources available for science in the Caribbean

Background

- EPA Region 2 representatives participated in a first of a kind “science visit” to the Caribbean, November 2011
- The Region met with and government and university organizations in Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands
- visit focused on ways to explore opportunities for science communication and collaboration
- key outcome of the visit was the need to establish a group involving science organizations to address the science needs of the Caribbean in a comprehensive way, leveraging limited resources

- Region 2 established the Caribbean Science Consortium in January, 2012. The Consortium is comprised of Government and University Organizations in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands
- Consortium member organizations:
 - University of Puerto Rico – Rio Piedras, Mayaguez and Medical Sciences Campuses;
 - Inter American University of Puerto Rico;
 - Ponce School of Medicine and Health Sciences;
 - University of Virgin Islands, St. Thomas and St. Croix Campuses
 - Puerto Rico Department of Health;
 - Puerto Rico Environmental Quality Board;
 - US Virgin Island Department of Planning and Natural Resources
 - EPA Region 2, DESA and CEPD

Consortium Objectives

- improve and facilitate science communication and collaboration in the Caribbean;
- Identify the critical environmental issues facing the Caribbean;
- facilitate the identification of potential opportunities for collaboration;
- leverage limited scientific resources;
- identify and work to address education, outreach, and training needs.

Consortium Business

- ❑ established a Charter to govern the Consortium
- ❑ developed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among it's member organizations to formalize collaboration and the sharing/leveraging of resources – 1st of a kind MOU!
- ❑ developed an Annual Workplan; key elements include Technical Assistance; Education/Outreach; Information Sharing; Internships; Project Inventory; Scientific Capabilities; and Scientific Meetings

Consortium Accomplishments

- provided analytical assistance to the Ponce School of Medicine Cano Martin Pena epidemiology study;
- provided analytical assistance to the Inter American University watershed runoff study of the Coral Reefs at La Parguera;
- Collaboration on joint epidemiological studies of Non-PRASA communities between IAU and PSMHS;

Consortium Accomplishments

- conducted a “gap analysis” of the University of the Virgin Islands Laboratory to assist them in their goal to be accredited;
- Developed a table of analytical & field capabilities;
- established a “shared site” for the Consortium
- provided internships at the Region 2 Laboratory

Non-PRASA Communities

- Science Consortium sponsored a half day meeting of government and university partners in PR (June 2013) to focus on a “signature issue”: Water Quality of small potable water systems – “Non-PRASA Systems;
- Established a Non-PRASA Systems Workgroup comprised of government and university partners, including several members of the Consortium;
- The main charge to the workgroup is to discuss how to best collaborate, including common objectives, current activities, and a forward strategy

Non-PRASA Communities

Key Objectives of the Non-PRASA Workgroup

- Create a strategy that best leverages the expertise of government, non-government university partners towards improving water quality and health of consumers of small potable systems.
- Identify and prioritize non-PRASA research studies and other projects such as education and outreach;
- Identify and inventory past and present research studies of non-PRASA systems
- Update and inventory of very small systems, i.e., those serving < 25 people.

Going Forward

- continue to foster collaboration;
- identify the critical environmental issues facing the Caribbean;
- identify the research and resources needed to address those issues;
- continue to foster and advance collaborative research and resources on the Non-PRASA community water systems

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